DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 210 407 UD 021 906

AUTHOR Upton, James N.; Fonow, Mary Margaret
TITLE Project Networking: Citizen Participation in School Desegregation Decisionmaking.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, D.C. Equal Educational Opportunity Program.
PUB DATE Aug 81
GRANT G008006961
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (Toronto, Ontario, Canada, August 24-28, 1981). For a related document, see ED 163 112.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; *Community Involvement; *Community Organizations; *Desegregation Methods; Elementary Secondary Education; *Networks; *Organizational Communication; Policy Formation; School Community Relationship; School Desegregation; School Policy
IDENTIFIERS *Columbus Public Schools OH

ABSTRACT

This report is based on a case study which examined the efforts of community organizations in Columbus, Ohio to strengthen citizen participation (through the use of networking strategies) in the implementation phase of school desegregation. The report describes interorganizational networks as a function of exchange relations. Specialization, scarcity of resources and the limits of power in individual organizations are cited as the major reasons for the development of exchange relations. The data from the study are reported in terms of the relationships between the mean number of network links established among various organizations, and the funding status, type of activity, target group, scope of issue and age of the organizations involved in the network. The following results are cited: (1) privately funded community organizations have more network ties than public funded organizations; (2) advocacy group organizations have the most network ties, followed by service and public information organizations; (3) single issue and older organizations have more network ties than multi-issue or younger organizations; and (4) community organizations which identify the school as its target have more network ties than groups which target either the black community or the public at large. (JCD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

NOV 13 1981

ED210407

PROJECT NETWORKING: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DESEGREGATION DECISIONMAKING

James N. Upton
The Ohio State University
and
The Institute for Black Community
Research and Development
Columbus, Ohio

Mary Margaret Fonow
Otterbein College

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

James N. Upton

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The American Sociological Association
1981 Annual Meeting, August 24-28
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

The research upon which this paper is based was performed pursuant to Grant Number G008006961, the U.S. Department of Education, Emergency School Aid Act, Division of Equal Education Opportunity Programs.

UD021906

Organized citizen participation is not a new phenomenon in the context of American politics. The philosophical debate about the merits of citizen involvement in government is as old as the concept of democracy. However, it is only within the past fifteen years that social scientists have begun to identify the specific mechanisms of participation, the feasibility of citizen participation and the outcomes of citizen participation [(Hutcheson and Shevin, 1976; Sarason et al., 1977; Steinberg, 1977)].

Local politics provides the greatest opportunity for direct citizen participation in governmental decisionmaking. In terms of grassroot organizing, Perlman (1976:6) argues that the future trend is local participation,

> ...the thrust of the seventies is on local organizations and on issues which are more rooted in people's daily lives, have a long term perspective, and raise people's consciousness through involvement at a concrete level in their communities.

By focusing on local issues,

> ...contemporary grassroot groups can take advantage of the brakes in the system to win victories and demonstrate that authority can be challenged and that the people can generate power through their numbers (Perlman, 1976:7).

While there are certainly limits to localism,participation at the local level gives people experience in dealing with and understanding the power structure of that system (Perlman, 1976:20). This experience expands consciousness about the possibility of change and enhances one's actual potential for impacting on policy.

Our case study examines the efforts of community organizations in Columbus, Ohio to strengthen citizen participation in the implementation phase of school desegregation. Specifically we examine the networking strategies employed by 22 local community organizations in their effort to impact on school policies. Our sample of community organizations was drawn from the 1980 Directory of Human Services for Columbus and Franklin County. A mailed questionnaire was sent to 63 organizations. Forty organizations responded but only 17 identified specific efforts to effect school policy during the implementation of school desegregation and were thus included in the final sample. Five additional organizations were added to the sample in response to a survey of organizations attending a series of city-wide forums on the implementation of school desegregation. Therefore, our study includes comparable data on a total of 22 community organizations. A profile of the organizations is provided in Table 1 (see Appendix A).

Networking

Some federal policymakers, frustrated by their efforts to facilitate citizen participation in a variety of federally funded programs, have turned to the analysis of networks for insight. Networking is one strategy that grassroot community organizations can and in fact do employ to increase their effectiveness in the public policy arena. Networking is also an adaptive mechanism which can aid the organization in its growth, adjustment and interaction within its environment. Technically, an

interorganizational network consists of a number of distinguishable organizations having a significant amount of interaction with each other (Benson, 1975:230). The characteristics of networks vary. Some networks may consist of a series of organizations linked by multiple direct ties to each other while others are characterized by a clustering of linkages around one or a few mediating organizations. The linkages within a network may be direct or indirect, positive or negative, reciprocal or non-reciprocal (Benson, 1975:230).

Central to understanding the character of interorganizational relations in a network is the notion of exchange. "An exchange relation consists of voluntary transactions involving the transfer of resources between two or more actors for mutual benefit" (Cook, 1977:64). The formation of exchange relations occurs among organizations primarily for two interrelated reasons: specialization and scarcity. Since most organizations have become increasingly specialized they must exchange with other organizations in order to obtain necessary resources and to meet their objectives. Furthermore, the "limitations on the availability of resources necessitate organizational interdependence and fosters further specialization" (Cook, 1977:64). Aldrich (1976) argues that the scarcity of resources creates uncertainty within an organization's environment and that the routinization of exchanges reduces this uncertainty. "Organizations will make a commitment to exchange, given that the exchange provides for each actor a reduction in its organizational uncertainty" (Cook, 1977:65).

A number of resources have been identified as crucial to the survival of organizations and therefore highly valued in the exchange process. Resource acquisition activities often determine the character of interaction between organizations in a network. Among the resources most highly valued are "acquisition and control of funding, personnel, information, products and services, and above all, authority" (Aldrich, 1976:419). According to Benson (1975:232), the most fundamental resources are money and authority. "Given money and authority other needed commodities may be acquired, while the reverse is probably not possible."

The final element in the exchange equation is power. Some organizations within a network will have more power than others and hence the potential to dominate the entire network. The more powerful organizations will influence the nature of exchanges between organizations within a given network (Benson, 1975:233). Emerson (1962) and Aldrich (1976) link power to resource dependency. Organizations with alternative ways of acquiring the resources necessary to meet organizational objectives are in a better bargaining position within the network than organizations that rely upon a single source for resources. Thus the power of an organization in an exchange relation is increased as the scope of the resources increases (Cook, 1977:66).

The success of organized efforts to affect policy depend on a number of factors. An organization's sensitivity to the interorganizational environment and the degree to which that environment provides resources for the organization are important.

It is the organizational environment that provides both the constraints and opportunities for community organizations to influence school policy (Gittell, 1979). Particularly significant is an organization's ability to build upon the political interest structure already in existence in the local community (Upton, et al., forthcoming).

Our study examines the interorganizational environment of community organizations concerned with school policy. Is there a network? Is it an effective route to increase citizen participation? What types of organizations are likely to be a part of a network? Are organizations aware of each others' activities? Are they willing to exchange resources in order to achieve mutual goals? What types of exchanges have taken place in the past and what future exchanges would organizations propose?

Research suggests that different groups in the local community utilize different means to affect policy. Middle class citizens are more likely to rely on formal associations such as trade unions, political parties, church groups and voluntary associations to articulate their concerns. Low income groups are more likely to rely on informal forms of association such as primary groups, informal networks and nationality groups (Steinberg, 1977:2). Financial stability is a critical environmental resource and again differences emerge between middle and low income groups. Low income organizations rely much more heavily on external funding sources and this fact reduces significantly their level of autonomy and impact on policy (McDonnell and Zellman, 1978; Gittell, et al., 1979).

Internal structure and organizational activities also influence effectiveness. Middle class groups tend to be advocacy organizations and rely on rotating leadership, voluntary membership and internal democratic way of operating. Low income groups are more likely to engage in service delivery activities and hence rely more on a paid professional staff. Those low income groups that do engage in advocacy are frequently inspired by charismatic leaders who supply non-material resources to the groups by virtue of their reputation and exerience (Huguenin, et al., 1979:62).

Several specific types of activities have been identified with increased policy impact. In the long run, advocacy activities have a bigger pay off and activity that centers on expanding the base of participation is more effective than activities directed toward substantive issues (Huguenin, et al., 1978:68). Community organizations are more effective when they engage in parallel activities rather than duplicative activities to the school system. Activities that involve the processing of grievances also influence the effectiveness of community organizations.

> The capacity to redress grievances allows an organization to provide a service that both builds a constituency and has the potential to improve school/community relations (Huguenin, et al., 1978:68).

Organizational effectiveness is associated with the extent of networking or sharing of information or resources among groups. Since networking works best as an exchange relationship, it works best for middle class groups which have the most resources to exchange. This places low income groups with fewer resources to

exchange at a disadvantage since they lack the resources which make interorganizational linkages useful (Gittell, 1979). Research also suggests that organizations with the strongest network have the greatest impact on school policy. Privately funded organizations with volunteer staff engaging in advocacy activity tend to be more effective (Huguenin, et al., 1979).

We examine the relationship between age, organizational activities, target group, funding source and range of issues and an organization's ability to engage in networking activity.

Findings

The following tables (Tables 2-6) reflect the relationship between a variety of organizational types and the mean number of direct network links those organizations established with other organizations in their environment. The first relationship is between funding status and mean number of network links.

TABLE 2: Mean Number of Network Links by Funding Status

	Funding Status		
	Private	Public	Mix
Mean No. of Links	4.1	2.8	3.6

Community organizations that rely on private funds have the most direct links with other organizations. Private money raised through membership dues, investments or private foundations has fewer strings attached and allows an organization greater freedom

to exchange resources with other community organizations. Internal funding sources lend greater stability to an organization and perhaps anchor the organization more securely within the organizational environment. Public money is unpredictable and an overreliance on external sources of income reduces an organizations desirability as an exchange partner. It also makes an organization more resource dependent and less powerful.

TABLE 3: Mean Number of Direct Network Links by Type of Activity

	Activity		
	Advocacy	Service	Public Info.
Mean No. of Links	4.7	3.5	2.3

Community organizations were subgrouped by the type of activity they listed as primary in their day to day operations. Advocacy groups are organizations that lobby the school organization on behalf of an interest group or issue. These organizations seek support for their constituency and engage in a wide range of activities. Monitoring, lobbying, testifying are some examples of advocacy activity. Service groups are community organizations that seek to provide a service to the school system. Counseling, tutoring, in-service training are examples of this type of activity. Public information groups seek, usually through research and fact finding, to inform the public about school policy or programs. These organizations do not attempt to organize any particular segment of the community. Usually they go to great pains to announce their impartiality.

Advocacy groups have the greatest number of direct links to other community organizations. This finding is consistent with a recent Rand Report that found that citizen advocacy activities have a greater impact in facilitating school desegregation than do citizen groups engaged in service activities (McDonnell and Zellman, 1978). Our finding seems to suggest that advocacy organizations are more successful in networking than other types of organizations and thus increase their chances of having an impact on school policy.

TABLE 4: Mean Number of Direct Network Links by Target Group

	Target Group		
	Black	Public	School
Mean No. of Links	3.5	3.7	4.3

Citizen organizations that list as their target group some component of the school system (teachers, students, school board, administration) have the most direct links with other organizations in their environment. Groups that want to increase public awareness or provide an educational service to the general public have fewer ties, and organizations that specifically targeted blacks as their constituency have the fewest links. This latter group seeks to raise the consciousness of the black community about a school issue or provide some type of educational service to the black community. Some of these organizations are associations of black professionals that proposed a

desegregation related program or activity. For example, the local branch of the National Conference of Black Lawyers co-sponsored a forum to inform black parents and students of their legal rights in school discipline cases. Black psychologists, social workers and educators have formed similar associations. These organizations have a dual purpose. One purpose is to lobby for the interest of the black professional within the professions. The second purpose is to provide some type of professional expertise in the area of black community development.

TABLE 5: Mean Number of Network Links by Scope of Issue

	Scope of Issue	
	Multi-Issue	Single-Issue
Mean No. of Links	3.5	4.1

Single-issue organizations are community groups that list education as their sole interest. Multi-issue groups include education along with other concerns such as housing, employment or neighborhood development. Half the organizations in our sample are multi-issue and half are single-issue. However, single-issue organizations have more direct links with other organizations within the organizational environment.

TABLE 6: Mean Number of Direct Network Links by Age of Organization

	Age of Organization		
	0-5 years	6-25 years	26+ years
Mean No. of Links	2.8	3.0	5.4

Older community organizations (26+ years) have the greatest number of direct links. Organizational maturity gives an organization greater legitimacy and authority, both valuable commodities on the exchange market between organizations within a network. The age structure of community organizations in Columbus was very unusual. Nine organizations were under five years old and eight organizations were over 25 years old. Age appears to be an important factor in establishing interorganizational linkages. The potential for networking between older and younger organizations appears promising.

Conclusion

Community organizations with a private funding source have more network ties than public funded organizations. Organizations engaging in advocacy activities have the most network ties, followed by service and then public information organizations. Single-issue and older organizations have more network ties than multi-issue or younger organizations. Finally, community organizations which identify the school as its target have more network ties than groups that target either the black community or the public at large.

There does appear to be some degree of networking taking place among community organizations in Columbus. But the networking does not seem to be as extensive as in cities where the desegregation order mandates citizen participation. The most sought after resources in a potential exchange were funds and people while the resources most often offered were information and contacts. Perhaps competition between groups prevents actual exchange from taking place. We will examine the role of conflict and competition in future research.

Given the current political climate, desegregation efforts will receive little federal support. Already federal funding to school districts and community organizations under the Emergency School Aid Act for desegregation implementation has been drastically reduced. Support for desegregation will have to come from the grassroots through citizen participation. Hopefully, efforts to strengthen citizen organizations through networking will result in a more responsive educational system. Increased citizen efficacy is healthy for the individual and healthy for a democratic society.

APPENDIX A

TABLE 1: Profile of Community Organizations Involved in Desegregation Implementation in Columbus, Ohio

Group	Age	Funding	Scope	Activity	Target	No. of Direct Network Links
1	1978	Public	Single	Service	Schools	2
2	1980	Public	Single	Public Info	Schools	0
3	1920	Private	Multi	Advocacy	Public	10
4	1918	Mix	Multi	Advocacy	Black	6
5	1972	Mix	Single	Service	Public	1
6	1954	Private	Single	Service	Schools	6
7	1920	Private	Single	Advocacy	Schools	7
8	1938	Private	Single	Public Info	Schools	3
9	1978	Private	Single	Advocacy	Schools	8
10	1980	Private	Single	Service	Black	2
11	1960	Public	Multi	Service	Public	2
12	1972	Public	Single	Service	Black	6
13	1980	Public	Single	Service	Black	4
14	1978	Private	Single	Advocacy	Black	6
15	1980	Private	Multi	Advocacy	Public	2
16	1950	Private	Multi	Advocacy	Public	1
17	1930	Private	Multi	Advocacy	Public	16
18	1968	Private	Multi	Public Info	Black	2
19	1960	Private	Multi	Public Info	Black	4
20	1980	Private	Multi	Advocacy	Black	0
21	1978	Private	Multi	Advocacy	Black	1
22	1909	Mix	Multi	Service	Black	4

REFERENCES

Aldrich, Howard
1976 "Resource Dependence and Interorganizational Relations: Local Employment Service Offices and Social Services Sector Organizations." Administration and Society 7:419-454.

Benson, J. Kenneth
1975 "Interorganizational Network as a Political Economy." Administrative Science Quarterly 20:229-249.

Cook, Karen S.
1977 "Exchange and Power in Networks of Interorganizational Relations." The Sociological Quarterly 18:62-82.

Emerson, Richard M.
1962 "Power Dependence Relations." American Sociological Review 27:31-41.

Gittell, Marilyn
1979 Citizen Organizations: Citizen Participation in Educational Decisionmaking. Draft report.

Huguenin, Kathleen, Ross Zerchykov and Don Davies
1979 Narrowing the Gap Between Intent and Practice: A Report to Policymakers on Community Organizations and School Decisionmaking. Boston: The Institute for Responsive Education.

Hutcheson, J.D. and J. Shevin
1976 Citizen Groups in Local Politics: A Bibliographic Review. Santa Barbara: Clio Press.

McDonnell, L. and G.L. Zellman
1978 An Evaluation of the Emergency School Aid Act Non-Profit Organization Program. Santa Monica: Rand.

Perlman, Janice E.
1976 "Grassrooting the System." Social Policy September/October:4-20.

Sarason, Seymour B., Charles Carroll, Kenneth Maton, Saul Cohen and Elizabeth Lorentz
1977 Human Services and Resource Networks. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Steinberg, Lois Saxelby
1977 Social Science Theory and Research on Participation and Voluntary Associations: A Bibliographic Essay. Boston: Institute for Responsive Education.

Upton, James, Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook
Forthcoming "Federal Funding for Citizen Participation: The Case of School Desegregation." Journal of Applied Social Sciences.